

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration is respectfully requested of the Office Action of October 2, 2006 relating to the above-identified application.

Applicants have amended the specification on page 1 to clarify that FIG. 1 represents the present invention, as stated, for example, on page 10, lines 9-11.

It is FIG. 4, not Figure 1 that represents a conventional apparatus, i.e. an embodiment in JP 07-148451, as stated on page 1, line 13 of specification and page 10, lines 16-17.

The amendments to pages 3 and 12 of the specification are of an editorial nature.

Applicants have amended the drawings to identify FIG. 4 as "Prior Art" consistent with the above notation.

To summarize the claim changes made in this amendment, Claims 1-4 have been amended to place the claims in even better format. New Claims 7-27 have been added to make certain that all aspects of the invention are properly claimed. No new matter is considered to be presented by these amendments and new claims in view of the support contained in the original filed application. Claims 5 and 6 have been cancelled.

New claims are supported by the original filed specification, for example, as follows:

Claim 7.	page 5, line 14 – page 6, line 6
Claim 8.	page 11, lines 16-19
Claim 9.	page 11, lines 16-19
Claim 10.	page 11, lines 19-21
Claim 11.	page 11, lines 19-21
Claim 12.	page 11, lines 21-24
Claim 13.	page 11, lines 21-24
Claim 14.	page 11, lines 21-24
Claim 15.	page 12, lines 8-17
Claim 16.	page 12, lines 8-17

Claim 17	page 12, lines 8-17
Claim 18.	page 12, lines 8-17
Claim 19.	page 12, line 18 – page 13, line 5
Claim 20.	page 12, line 18 – page 13, line 5
Claim 21.	page 12, line 18 – page 13, line 5
Claim 22.	page 13, lines 6-10
Claim 23.	page 13, lines 6-10
Claim 24.	page 13, lines 11-17
Claim 25.	page 12, lines 8-17
Claim 26.	page 12, line 18 – page 13, line 5
Claim 27.	page 13, lines 11-17

Claims 5 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C §112, second paragraph, as being incomplete for omitting essential structural cooperative relationships of elements, such omission amounting to a gap between the necessary structural connections.

In this response, applicants have cancelled Claims 5 and 6, rendering the rejection moot.

The rejection of Claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by JP 07-148451 is traversed and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The rejection with respect to Claim 5 has become moot in view of the cancellation of that claim.

The Office Action rejects Claims 1-5 based on FIG.1 in the present application as representing the prior art JP 07-148451. First of all, applicants wish to clarify and respectfully submit that FIG. 1 represents applicant's invention and FIG. 4 represents JP 07-148451. By the foregoing amendment, the specification has been corrected to point this out.

The confusion created by the error on page 1 of the application which erroneously identified FIG. 1 with prior art is regretted.

JP 07-148451 discloses feeding a polymer-type flocculation agent into a liquid containing paint particles of the receiving tank 105a to make the paint particles sticky, which causes many problems, as discussed in Background of the Invention and Summary of the Invention of the present application; see page 3, last 2 lines, to page 4, lines 1-7.

To solve those problems, applicants' invention involves feeding both a dispersing agent and a floatation agent into the liquid containing paint particles, instead of feeding the flocculation agent only. This feature is included in independent Claims 1 and 7. It is clearly understood that JP 07-148451 fails to teach or suggest feeding the dispersing agent and the floatation agent.

Regarding the dispersing agent, applicants have pointed out more specifically that the dispersing agent serves to finely divide the paint particles and render the paint particles non-sticky (Claim 8), and further, that the dispersing agent renders the paint particles non-sticky by a hydroxide or oxide absorbing to a surface of the paint particles (Claim 9).

Regarding the floatation agent, applicants' invention points out that the floatation agent has no deflocculating property (Claim 10), and further, that the floatation agent comprises a polymer which serves to flocculate the paint particles by crosslinking function of the polymer (Claim 11).

It is clear that JP 07-148451 fails to show feeding the dispersing agent and the floatation agent. Therefore, JP 07-148451 does not anticipate the claimed invention and the rejection of Claims 1 to 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) should be withdrawn. For the same reasons, JP 07-148451 fails to anticipate the subject matter of new Claims 7-27.

The rejection of Claim 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) has been rendered moot by cancellation of that claim.

Accordingly, applicants' claimed invention is patentably distinguishable over the cited prior art. In view of the above remarks, applicants submit that the rejections are all overcome. Hence, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

Favorable action at the Examiner's earliest convenience is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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